

Shoshone Episcopal Mission  
Boarding School and Roberts' Residence  
(Mission House)

Three miles southwest of Fort Washakie on  
Moccasin Lake Road

Wind River Indian Reservation

Fort Washakie Vicinity

Fremont County

Wyoming

HABS No. WYO-54A

HABS  
WYO,  
7-FOWA.V,  
2A-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D. C. 20005

SHOSHONE EPISCOPAL MISSION, BOARDING SCHOOL  
AND ROBERTS' RESIDENCE (MISSION HOUSE)HABS  
WYO,  
7-FOWA.V,  
2A-

Location: Three miles southwest of Fort Washakie on Moccasin Lake Road, Wind River Indian Reservation, Fort Washakie, Fremont County, Wyoming.  
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: (USGS Wind River Quadrangle Map) 12.670290.4761040.

Present Owner: Episcopal Diocese of Wyoming, 310 University Avenue, Laramie, Wyoming.

Present Occupant: The only permanent resident is the caretaker.

Present Use: Parish house.

Statement of Significance: This structure was the first Episcopal Mission Boarding School for Girls established in the Wyoming Territory. The building grew in response to the needs of the school and chronicles the development of education at the Wind River Indian Reservation.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1889-1890.
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Ca. 1888-1889 Washakie, head Chief of the Shoshones, gave 160 acres of Wind River Reservation land along Trout Creek to the Reverend John Roberts as the site for a girls' boarding school and supporting farm. In 1908-1909 by Act of Congress and by agreement of the Arapaho and Shoshone Tribal Councils, the Episcopal Church was given legal title to the land on which the mission was located.
4. Original plan and construction: The original building measured approximately 40' (five-bay front) by 33'. It consisted of a large dining and classroom on the north side of a central hall and two smaller rooms on the south side for the Roberts' family. Upstairs, the Roberts' family and mission employees occupied two bedrooms on the south side of the hall, while the boarding students shared a dormitory room on the north side.

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5. Alterations and additions: Almost as soon as the main building was completed, changes began to occur. The main building at first served as school, boarding facility, and the Roberts' home. A one-story brick kitchen was added to the rear of the building ca. 1895. A partition was added to the north room of the first floor creating a living room and dining room for the employees (ca. 1895). A small brick room was added near the Roberts' bedroom on the south side at the west corner of the first floor to serve as Reverend Roberts' office (ca. 1895). Ca. 1900 the girls' dining room was added behind the kitchen connecting the formerly free standing laundry room with the main building; and, the present frame front porch was also built. Another school room of brick and stone was added behind the girls' dining room in 1930, bringing the ell to its present 71' length. At the same time another dormitory room was added above the kitchen. Finally, the small brick office of Reverend Roberts was removed (ca. 1950) following his death.

Gwen Roberts, a daughter of Reverend John Roberts, lived in the building until 1960 at which time it became a parish center. To meet parish center needs a partition between the girls' dining room and the rear school room was recently removed along with the partition in the Roberts' living and dining room. A partition was added on the second floor in the girls' large dormitory room on the north side of the original building.

- B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure: See Part I. B. Shoshone Episcopal Mission, (HABS No. WYO-54).
- C. Sources of Information: See Part I. C. Shoshone Episcopal Mission, (HABS No. WYO-54).

Prepared by John Paige  
Architectural Historian  
National Park Service  
Summer, 1973

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION - MISSION BOARDING SCHOOL

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This simple building of Georgian character was the first Indian girls' boarding school in the

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Wyoming Territory and shows a considerable sophistication for its place and time.

2. Condition of fabric: Fair.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The original rectangular structure is approximately 33' x 41'. There have been numerous additions at the rear and, as a result, the structure is a series of rectangular elements totalling approximately 54 feet in width at its widest point and 115 feet in length.
2. Foundations: Sandstone.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The original building is of red brick. Additions to the building are also red brick with the exception of an addition at the rear on the north side which is random ashlar sandstone and a porch along the south sides of the building which is white frame. The brick was made locally.
4. Structural system, framing: Masonry bearing wall with wooden frame interiors and roof.
5. Porches, stoops: There is a one-story frame screened-in porch across the east front which replaced an original wooden porch and steps. There is a narrow screened-in porch along the south side of the ell running approximately 47' from the rear of the original building.
6. Chimneys: There is an interior end chimney in the center of each side wall of the original structure. Constructed of the same red brick as the building, each chimney stack appears to have contained two flues. They have decorative brick paneling and corbeling. The south chimney is T-shaped. There are also two metal ventilators on the roof of the original building. There are two brick chimneys on the additions.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance on the east front of the original building is a semicircular-arched opening flanked by paneled brick pilasters with stone caps. The double-leaf door is surmounted by a two-light semicircular transom. Each leaf has two panels, the top one

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larger than the bottom, outlined by heavy raised moldings. There are additional doorways on the south side of the additions. The westernmost opening is now closed. There is evidence of an opening (now bricked in) from the original structure into what was Reverend Roberts' office at the southwest corner of the original building.

- b. Windows and shutters: Two-over-two light double-hung sash with brick segmental-arch lintels and sandstone sills are found on the original building. Additions have various light arrangements of double-hung sash.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Painted standing seam metal hip roof on original structure. Addition roofs are both painted standing seam metal and green asphalt lock-tab shingles. The roof shapes on the additions are hip and gable.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Boxed cornice and eave. It was originally supported on brackets now removed.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: A school bell is mounted on the ridge above the girls' dining room to the rear of the original structure.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: There is a partial basement under a portion of the north side of the original structure in which a furnace is located.
- b. First floor: The original building is a center hall plan with two rooms to the south of the hall and one room to the north of the hall. These rooms were the living/dining areas of the structure with the southwest (rear) room serving as the bedroom of the Reverend and Mrs. Roberts. Later additions to the structure include a dining room and kitchen to the rear of the original building and two rest-rooms to the north of the dining room and kitchen. The rear portion of the dining room was originally a school room.
- c. Second floor: In the original building there were two rooms to the south of the center hall which were occupied

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by the daughters of Reverend and Mrs. Roberts (front) and by the matron and cook (rear). On the north side of the center hall was one long room which served as a dormitory for the students. This room now is divided into two rooms. At the rear of the original building and over the kitchen is an additional room which was used as a dormitory. There is a small room containing a water closet located in the northeast corner of this dormitory room.

2. Stairways: There is a stairway on the south side of the center hall which leads to the second floor. It is a straight, single run stair with turned balusters. The simple molded handrail runs from the first floor newel post unbroken to the newel post at the second floor and then returns along the opening and turns into the wall. There is a stairway under this stair which leads to the basement.
3. Flooring: While there is some evidence of hardwood flooring, most of it is now covered with asphalt tile, linoleum or carpet.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Gypsum board, painted. Stamped metal ceiling in south front room on first floor.
5. Doorways and doors: The doors in the original building are recessed four-panel wooden doors with simple unmolded wooden frames and glazed transoms. The doors in the additions are of varied type and design.
6. Special decorative features: The majority of the millwork in the original structure would appear to have been purchased through stock catalogs. Such elements as the main stairway, the sash, and the front door show a sophistication which could probably not be achieved at that time in the Wyoming territory by local craftsmen with the simple hand tools they most frequently employed. However, the simple chamfer molding of the frame of the second floor center front window would appear to have been constructed on the site.
7. Hardware: The original box-locks and what was probably a large, substantial lock on the front door have been replaced with modern hardware.
8. Mechanical equipment: The structure is now heated by a hot water system with radiators. There is no evidence of original lighting fixtures in the house. Present electrical fixtures are modern and consist of both incandescent and fluorescent types.

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D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: This building is located in the center of a complex of buildings and was the focal point of activity for the Shoshone Episcopal Mission Boarding School for Indian girls. The front is oriented 55 degrees east of north.

Prepared by J. William Rudd  
Architect  
Project Supervisor  
National Park Service  
Summer, 1973

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were made during the 1973 Wyoming Project undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Wyoming Recreation Commission. During the project, records were made on twenty-eight (28) individual subjects and six (6) historic areas.

This project was under the general supervision of John Poppeliers, chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Project Supervisor was Professor J. William Rudd, Architect, of the University of Cincinnati. Project Historian was John Paige, Oklahoma State University. The measured drawings were prepared by John Uhlir, University of California at Berkeley, Architect; and Student Assistant Architects Richard Duflocq, University of Cincinnati, Clayton Fraser, University of Tennessee, and Richard Wyatt, California Polytechnic University at San Luis Obispo. Jack E. Boucher, HABS staff photographer, provided the photographic record. This report was edited for HABS in 1977 by Candace Reed.